STATE OF ARIZONA

DES

News Release

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Tracy L. Wareing, Director

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MEDIA CONTACT
DES Public Information Office
(602) 542-4296

Visit our web site at
www.azdes.gov

FOSTER HOME LICENSING GOES ONLINE WITH DES' *QuickConnect* SYSTEM

PHOENIX – (October 30, 2007) In a move to provide more effective service to Arizona's abused and neglected children, the Department of Economic Security has taken foster and adoptive home licensing online – processing almost twice the number of applications in one-third less time.

QuickConnect offers potential foster and adoptive parents – as well as existing homes that are renewing their annual licenses – the opportunity to provide or update the necessary background information and documents via any Internet connection. A home study and inspection must still be conducted by a community-based licensing worker and a state safety inspector.

As part of Governor Janet Napolitano's Efficiency Review Initiative, a statewide effort to make government services more efficient and accessible, over the past three years, DES reduced the paperwork required in the application by more than 90 percent. By adding *QuickConnect* last year, the Department eliminated application processing delays caused by mailing times and incomplete applications.

The combined result of these efficiencies is that DES has increased the number of applications processed each month from 248 per month in 2003 to 464 per month in 2007. In addition, the amount of time it takes to process an initial application has dropped from 34 days in 2003 to 21 days in 2007. As more applications are submitted and processed electronically, the Department expects even further improvements in processing times.

"Those numbers are impressive, but Efficiency Review isn't just about saving time or money, it's about helping to make government more responsive to the needs of its citizens," Governor Napolitano said. "By increasing the efficiency of foster and adoptive home licensing, we now have 70% more foster homes available to care for abused or neglected children."

"Think of what a safe, supportive family environment means to a child who has left an abusive home."

QuickConnect is used for all types of foster care licensing or certification. Individuals interested in becoming foster or adoptive parents can obtain additional information about the process at www.azkidsneedu.gov . Once potential applicants attend an orientation session and identify a community-based licensing agency to work through the application process with, they will be given a Username and Password with which to access the *QuickConnect* system.

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